



THE WHITTLERS BENCH

Southport Historical Society

501 North Atlantic Avenue
Southport, North Carolina 28461

THE WHITTLERS BENCH
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GREETINGS

The Southport Historical Society welcomes visitors to the Old Brunswick County Jail and Law Enforcement Display.

Society members will be available to answer questions about the jail, Southport, local history and genealogy.

We hope your time here is fabulously enjoyable and we encourage recommendations you may have to improve our open house.

SOUTHPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

This is a typical newsletter sent to all members. If you are interested in receiving the newsletter or wish to know more about our programs, please contact one of our members.

* BICENTENNIAL QUILT *

Our heritage quilt will be presented to the city during Southport's Independence Day Celebration. The display case is being installed on the first floor hallway of City Hall.

As this newsletter goes to print, the exact details of the presentation have not yet been finalized. Please watch the State Port Pilot for details, attend the ceremony and bring your friends to see the quilt.

A rough draft of a booklet describing each square in the quilt has been completed; however, it will not be ready for publication and sale until later this year.

ONE LAST REMINDER - Unless you have paid your 1993 dues, or pay them real soon, this will be your last issue of WHITTLERS BENCH. Do you really want to miss learning about Old Southport? Come on, send in your dues.

"Looking Back" — The History Page

Susan Carson, Editor

JULY 4, 1993



We are happy to present another fine article in our series of GROWING UP IN SOUTHPORT. This one is by Mrs. Cassie Smith Cochran. Thank you so much, Cassie.

All of God's creation is wonderful, beautiful, and special, but growing up in a little town like Southport was extra special to me! With acres to explore and see all that God had put here for the young and curious was never-ending pleasure. We rambled with our friends in the fields and woods seeing the different wild flowers, and the Venus Fly Traps which we would touch with a blade of grass to watch it close around it, thinking it had caught a fly for lunch. We saw Jack-in-the-Pulpits and pitcher plants and jumped from one side of the ditch banks to the other in search of the dainty violets that grew there in profusion. It never occurred to us to worry about the snakes that might be lurking there; we just wanted to see who could have the largest bunch of violets to take home to Mama.

Then there were the times we went in search of the wild blueberries, which we called huckleberries, and the blackberries which we often referred to as briarberries. The berries made the best cobblers ever - served warm with our own cow's sweet cream. And there were the hickory nuts and chinquapins to hunt and gather in the fall. Girls would make necklaces out of the chinquapins and wear them to school. They came in handy for a little bite to eat when the teacher was not looking .

School days were happy days. We all joined in the simple games of tag, leapfrog, jump rope, volley ball and foot racing. Once a year all the high schools in the county came together in Southport for a good time in competition in sports and academics. We referred to these occasions as "Field Day".

Our teachers took us on field trips which were learning and pleasurable times for us. We took our lunches and hiked where we were going, sometimes as far as the old lighthouse at Price's Creek.

Then there was the beautiful Cape Fear River for wading at the edge, swimming at Little Coney, and exploring the old boats that had been abandoned along the shore.

My first school experience was in what is now Franklin Square Art Gallery building. We had one small merry-go-round and one "giant-stride" swing set on our playground. We got our water from the pump in Franklin Square. The water from the pump was tested once and found to be the purest in North Carolina. We had to bring our own drinking cups - the collapsible kind. We shared with those who did not have their own. Our restrooms were in small buildings back of the schoolhouse, one for boys and one for girls, with three or four stalls in each.

The railroad ran back of my house and when we knew it was about time for the train to come, we ran out to the tracks to wait. The engineer would wave and blow his whistle. After the train had passed, we ran and put our ears down on the tracks. Did you ever hear the rails sing? Well, we did.

After dark we could lie out on the grass on our backs and watch the stars coming out. We could pick out the Big Dipper, the North Star etc and see the beautiful white Milky Way. Of course, they are still there, but it is harder to see them now with all the street lights etc.

One thing my girl friends and I liked to do, after we began to wonder what boys were all about, was to help Eunice Finch (now Huntley) with her romance. We would sit on the sidewalk in my yard, kicking up dirt with our barefeet and get a big thrill out of watching our one and only dentist, Dr. Roy Daniel, go to her house across the street and pick her up for their date. She lived in the house that is now the Peacock-Newnam Funeral Home. She was so pretty, and to us it was like a fairy tale unfolding when we learned she was getting married. Well, in a few years each of us had our chance with our own romance.

Sundays found us in church. I can't recall how all our pastors looked, but I well remember Dr. D. I. Watson and Mr. Asa Doshier, two of the men at Southport Baptist. Dr. Watson was our Sunday School Superintendent and I can remember his prayers. I remember Mr. Doshier for the times he came in to put wood or coal in the heater and when he would let some of us "help" him ring the churchbell. Of course, he had to hang on to us because the bell would lift us right off the floor.

North Carolina finally got around to paving the roads in this end of the county so it made it much easier for us to walk to town. We no longer had to slide around on slippery clay when it was wet weather. My goal in going to town was usually the library, which was then in two small rooms in the Government Building on the Garrison. We also walked in to attend the Amuzu Theatre where we could get a ticket for 10 cents and a bag of peanuts (roasted by the owner's wife) for 5 cents. Ice Cream was 5 cents a cone at either Watson's Pharmacy or Leggett's Drug Store, both on Moore Street, around the corner from the Amuzu.

Most people paid \$1.44 a month for electricity - the flat rate. Cars could be left on the street, unlocked and with the keys in the ignition switch. Hardly anyone ever locked a door. Sometimes we hooked our screen doors, but it was unusual to find anyone who locked a door.

Gone are those days. Progress came, and as always, there was good and bad with its coming. No matter what the future holds for our town I still thank God each day for the life he has given me and that Southport is where he put me. I love Southport and her people. It is not the great things in this world that makes the living worthwhile; its the little things like a tiny flower or a baby's smile, or a friendly gesture. So when I feel the need of a happy thought or two, I pull out a memory and wander back to my childhood days in my home town - Old Southport.

IN MEMORIAM

WE EXTEND OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO THE
FAMILY OF MEMBER JEAN CATHERINE GRAY,
WHO DIED JUNE 18, 1993.

SOUTHPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY